



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Washington Division

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May 17, 2010

HEV-WA/588

Ms. Paula J. Hammond
Secretary of Transportation
Department of Transportation
Olympia, Washington

Attention: Megan White, Kathleen Davis

Biological Assessment Template

Dear Ms. Hammond:

FHWA Washington Division will now require the use of a standard template for Biological Assessments (BAs) for Federal-aid projects in Washington State, including both Local Agency and State projects. The required format for informal and formal consultations can be found on the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) website at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Environment/Biology/BA/BAtemplates.htm>.

Local Agency projects that have already started preparing a BA have a 120-day “grandfather period” during which the use of the new BA template is recommended but will not be required. However, all local agency BAs submitted to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for initiating consultation after September 14, 2010 will be required to conform to the new WSDOT format.

WSDOT projects must use the new format for all Biological Assessments sent to the Services after July 1, 2010.

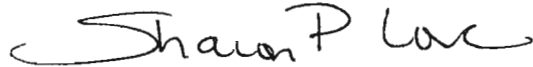
The new BA template was developed by WSDOT staff in consultation with FHWA and representatives of NMFS and USFWS. Consistent use of the standard template should increase the quality of our Biological Assessments and streamline the Section 7 Consultation process required by the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In addition the new format will expedite WSDOT’s internal review of BAs and the Services’ review of BAs and preparation of Biological Opinions.



If you have any questions please contact Sharon Love, Environmental Program Manager at 360-753-9558 or Sharon.Love@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

DANIEL M. MATHIS, P.E.
Division Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon P Love". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

By: Sharon P. Love, P.E.
Environmental Program Manager

cc: Marion Carey, WSDOT
Bill Leonard, WSDOT
Bob Thomas, WSDOT
John Grettenberger, USFWS
Mike Grady, NMFS